

**Conference on Effectively Restoring Ecosystems
22-24 August 2000, St. Louis, Missouri**

BACKGROUND

Session: Breakout 4A

Topic: Technical and Policy Review

Presenters :

- Forester Einarsen, CECW-PC
- Denver Austin, CESAD-ET-PL
- Alberto Gonzalez, CESAJ-DP-I

Recorder: Michelle L. Clark, CESWG-PE-RE

Objective: To examine current environmental policy, the continuing authorities programs, and the technical review process.

Description: Speakers provided attendees with an overview of Headquarters' environmental policy, the importance of CAP project review at all levels, and the steps involved in the technical review process. An open discussion followed each of the three presentations.

HIGHLIGHTS

**Environmental Policy
Forester Einarsen, CECW-PC**

As projects go up the chain for approval, there are some essential points, which if addressed properly, will help a project get authorization. The most crucial of these is conveying the significance of the project and the resources involved. Secondly, documenting involvement with USFWS from inception and coordination with all interested parties will show that as many aspects of the project as possible have been considered. It also shows utilization of other areas of expertise. Finally, mitigation should not be a factor in any restoration project; it shows poor planning. Trade-offs should out-weigh or balance the proposed work. Other common problems include lack of documented incremental/cost effective analysis, demonstrated compliance with laws, and identification/quantification of impacts.

Early review of project reports reduces potential flaws, ensuring a better project. It also helps produce a defensible report that is easily pushed forward.

**Continuing Authorities Program
Denver Austin, CESAD-ET-PL**

The approval process for CAP projects has changed recently. The basic steps are the same, but HQ delegated approving authority to the Divisions. In South Atlantic Division, the process is informal, but still requires certain steps. Reporting the request/problem to the District is the first. The District then sends the report to Division for determination of the proper authority and to request money. Division reviews the report for shortcomings, such as environmental red-flags and missing benefits and real estate sections. Division also monitors policy through guidance from HQ. After finalization of the report, Division comments and, if approved, sends a detailed approval letter to request funding.

Technical Review Process
Alberto Gonzalez, CESAJ-DP-I

The Technical Review Process has an integral part in project authorization. It provides review, comment, guidance on resolution of comments, and ensures the proper application of clearly established criteria, regulations, laws, codes, principles, and professional procedures. It is essential that the review strategy be developed early in the product development and incorporated into the Quality Control Plan for all project phases. The review must be ongoing throughout product development, using a team concept, not just a review performed at the end of development. Please view the PowerPoint presentation for details of the Technical Review Process.